

THE CRESSET.

VOL. I.

NEW-ALBANY, SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 1828.

NO. 1.

DUTIES ON IMPORTS.

Extracts from a report of the Committee on Manufactures.

The first subject which will be found in the bill, is that of iron, and considering the importance of the article, as one of both national and individual necessity, the changes in the present rates of duty are comparatively very light. An increase upon "iron in bars, not manufactured, in whole, or in part, by rolling," of from ninety cents upon 112 pounds, to one ct. per pound; upon "iron in bars, manufactured in whole or in part by rolling," of 7 dollars per ton of 2240 pounds; and upon "pig iron," of 12 1-2 cents per 112 pounds, beyond the present rates of duty, are the most material changes upon this article. Some amendments in the existing law, when evasions of the present duty have been discovered to exist by defects in the wording of the law, and some additions of duty upon particular descriptions of iron, and upon particular manufactures from it, complete the provisions on this subject.

The next subject in order, is that of wool and woollens. To these subjects the greater part of the testimony of the witnesses has been directed, and the Committee have used every effort in their power to obtain precise information as to the facts as they do actually exist in relation to the interests both of the wool grower and the manufacturer of wool. The real importance of these subjects to those sections of the country where wool is grown, and in which the manufactures are located, the feeling which has for some time agitated the public mind throughout the whole country, in relation, on the one side to the necessity of further protection to them, and on the other side, to the injurious effects which such a measure would have upon the purchasers of woollen fabrics, have all conspired to induce this exertion on the part of the committee. They have therefore made the examinations of the witnesses, upon these subjects, as minute as possible, and perhaps, in some instances, they may appear tedious. Indeed, many of the questions put to the witnesses will afford abundant evidence that the committee had not sufficient practical knowledge upon the subjects before them, to enable them to make a series of interrogations, the answers to which would place the testimony taken in the clearest light. And when the members of the house shall have examined the evidence relating to the manufacturer of woollen goods, the committee cannot doubt they will be entirely convinced that none but a person intimately acquainted with the various operations, could have drawn out a series of questions upon this subject, susceptible of clear and intelligible answers. The time of the committee did not authorize even an attempt to do this, and, therefore, the examinations, and particularly of some of the witnesses first examined, will appear, as they were really taken—the one answer, in many, if not in most instances, suggesting the subsequent question. It will also be found, upon an examination of the testimony, that the manufacture of woollens is hardly susceptible of being reduced within the limits of exact mathematical calculation, so as to enable the committee to arrive, with this kind of certainty, at the amount of duty which will furnish full protection, and, at the same time, will not go beyond that point. Certain positions, however, they believe to be proved by the evidence they have taken, which furnish great assistance in approaching to correct conclusions.

In relation to unmanufactured wool of domestic growth, the committee consider it to be fully proved that the present prices, in our markets, are unusually low, and the sales very dull; and that these effects are produced by the combined influence of the large importations of foreign wool, and the excessive importations of foreign woollen goods. Contrary to the opinions of some of the witnesses, the committee are strongly convinced that the provision of the present law, permitting the introduction of foreign wool, costing not exceeding ten cents per pound in the foreign market, at the almost nominal duty of 15 per cent. ad valorem, does admit wool, paying this duty, and invoiced at and below this price, which, in quality and use, materially conflicts with the common native wool of this country.

The opinion is strongly corroborated by the presentation, by one of the witnesses, to the committee, of five different specimens of foreign wool, imported into, and during the last fall selling in, the Boston market, at from six cents to fourteen cents per pound. The foreign invoices of all these wools were at a price not exceeding ten cents per pound, and invoiced at a price paid but a duty of fifteen per cent. ad valorem, which will afford much aid in determining the defects in the existing laws, and in applying the proper remedies to those defects; and they cannot but hope that this information, coming from persons intimately acquainted with the subjects of which they speak, and given under the solemn sanction of an oath, will have greater weight than the ordinary information upon which former laws upon these subjects have been passed.

The following positions, as relating to the manufacture of woollen goods, the committee believe themselves warranted in deducing, from the evidence they have taken, and they depend upon the evidence and opinions of the witnesses for the soundness of them.

1st. That the manufacture of woollen goods in this country, is at this time, a business laboring under severe depressions, and attended with loss more severe upon the finer qualities.

2d. That these depressions are owing, in a very great degree, to the excessive and irregular importations of foreign woollen goods into our markets; thus causing a fluctuation in, and an uncertainty of price for those goods, more injurious to the American manufacturer than even the depression of price which these importations produce.

3d. That the difference between the prices of wool, of the same quality, in this country and in England, is, at the present time, about fifty per cent. in favor of the latter country.

4th. That the cost of the raw wool in this country is about one-half of the cost of the fabric, when prepared for the market, as a general rule applying to most kinds of cloth.

5th. That, if the cost of the wool and the cost of the foreign materials used for dyeing, were the same in both countries, the process of manufacturing the wool into cloth, fitted for the market, can be performed as cheap in this country as it can in England.

6th. That the present duty upon woollen goods does not furnish the desired protection, and that no reasonable duty can be effectual, unless it be a specific square yard, instead of an ad valorem duty.

With a general reference to these positions, so far as they could be made applicable to the subject, and with a proper regard to the whole body of the testimony taken, the committee have proceeded to detail their propositions for the alteration and increase of the duties upon woollen goods. The law of 1824, with certain exceptions, enumerated in the act, imposed a duty of twenty-five per centum ad valorem upon foreign woollen goods, imported into this country, the actual value of which, at the place whence imported, should not exceed thirty-three and one third cents per square yard; and a duty, after the 30th day of June, 1825, of thirty-three and one third cents per centum ad valorem upon those costing more than thirty-three and one third cents per square yard. The exceptions from the duty of thirty-three and one third per cent were blankets and worsted stuff goods, upon which a duty of twenty-five per centum ad valorem was imposed; and from the goods paying a duty of twenty-five per centum ad valorem as costing less than thirty-three and one third cents per square yard, were excepted flannels and bazes, which were to pay a duty of thirty-three and one third per cent.

The committee have proposed to change all these ad valorem duties upon cloths, to specific square yard duties, making the same exceptions which are made in the act of 1824. Some of these exceptions the committee have left unaltered, and others they have proposed a small increase of duty upon. The article of blankets now pays a duty of 25 per cent. ad valorem, and they propose to increase this duty to 35 per cent.

This they have done, because they think the testimony warrants them in the belief, that, if the manufacture of blankets is encouraged in this country, they can be made here as cheap, in reference to the quality of the blanket, as they are now imported, and that, in this manufacture, a consumption may be found for large quantities of our native wool. The committee also consider blankets an article so essentially necessary for the soldier as to become an object of national policy, and a necessary for which we ought not to be dependent upon any foreign country.

The propositions of the committee as to the alteration and increase of duties upon woollens, generally, are as follows:

1st. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which, at the place whence imported, shall not exceed fifty cents per square yard, a specific duty of sixteen cents upon every square yard.

2d. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which, at the place whence imported, shall exceed 1 dollar per square yard, and shall not exceed \$2 50 per square yard, a specific duty of \$1 upon every square yard.

3d. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which at the place whence imported shall exceed \$2 50 per square yard, shall be deemed to have cost \$4 per square yard, and, at such valuation, shall be charged with, and pay a duty of, 40 per cent. ad valorem.

4th. Upon all manufactures of wool, &c. the actual value of which, at the place whence imported, shall exceed \$4 per square yard, shall be charged with, and pay a duty of, 45 per cent. ad valorem.

It will thus be seen, that the propositions made by the committee, if adopted, will give a considerable increase upon the present rates of duty, in any event, and may give a very large increase, if the importations should not be regulated by the rates of the duty. Should they be so regulated, the intermediate spaces would be left entirely to be supplied by the American manufacturer; and this, it is believed, would not only furnish him a market for the great body of his cloths, but would enable him to compete with the foreigner, even at the prices at which the minimum principle does not operate extensively to increase the duty. The committee have not gone to the extent proposed by many of the memorials, in the regulation of these duties, but they have gone to the extent to which, from the evidence taken by them, they believe the prosperity of our woollen manufactures require.

Hemp and flax, and some of the manufactures from them, have next claimed the consideration of the committee. The evidence which they have collected upon these subjects, though by no means voluminous, in their opinion, satisfactorily proves, that large sections of the country are capable of producing either kind of the raw material above mentioned, to any extent. So far as the committee have been able to learn, the State of Kentucky seems to have paid the most attention to the culture of hemp, and at this time, to possess the most extensive manufactures of the article of any State in the Union; while the states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey seem, as yet, to take the lead in the growing and manufacture of flax. Yet, there cannot be a doubt, but that the soil of either of these states, as well as of many, and, perhaps, most of the other states, is well adapted to the growth of either hemp or flax, and that they only need the consumption in duck, cordage, &c. of our extensive commerce, and of our growing navy, to give to these branches of agriculture, an encouragement which would soon make the raw materials, articles, not of import, but of export, and would supply the wants of our own country with as cheap and as valuable a fabric as is now obtained from foreign hands.

Indeed, if there are any articles, the produce of agricultural and manufacturing labor, which more than others, would seem to claim the fostering care of Government, not as a matter of policy merely, but as a matter both of interest and independence, hemp and flax would seem peculiarly to belong to them. These are materials the growing of which brings into profitable use, not only the fertile lands of the country, but the active labor of the husbandman, and the manufacturing of which into the fabrics of most extensive utility, would seem to be so simple and easy, as not to require the aid of foreign skill in its accomplishment. And, to our commerce in peace, and to our Navy in war, as well as to the common uses of all classes of society, materials and fabrics of more prime necessity cannot be named.

The committee cannot here refrain from directing the attention of the House to the testimony of a very intelligent manufacturer of flax, which will be found to compose a part of the evidence herewith reported. From the facts stated by him, it would seem that the alleged inferiority of the American hemp and flax, when compared with the foreign, arises, not from any inferiority of either of the materials as grown in this country, but from not pulling or harvesting the crops at the proper time, and from giving them a dew, instead of a water-rot. The committee

solicit particular attention to this part of the evidence they have taken, and hope it may attract the particular notice of the farmers of the country generally. The principal additions which the committee have proposed upon these articles, are upon the manufactured materials, and upon sail duck. The increase proposed upon raw hemp, is \$10 per ton, and that upon raw flax, is \$9 per ton; and both are made progressive, until the duty shall be \$60 per ton upon each; it now being \$35 upon hemp, and 15 per cent. or about equal to \$36 per ton upon flax. The proposition is to change the duty upon sail duck, from an ad valorem duty of 15 per cent. to a specific duty of 9 cents per square yard, and to regulate the drawback upon the article.

The next subject in order, though not second in importance to the agricultural interests of the country, which has occupied the attention of the committee, in the draft of the bill they submit to the House, is that of a further protection to the domestic spirits distilled from grain in the United States. And here the Committee feel bound to inform the House, that it is not with any view to benefit the manufacturer of this description of ardent spirits, that they have at all entertained the subject. It is the interest, and solely the interest, of the farmer who grows the grain from which these spirits are distilled, which renders it a subject at all worthy of the consideration of Congress, as connected with the protection of the industry and substantial interests of the country. But, if the most extensive farming interests of these United States, the grain growing interests of almost every section of the country, are subjects of importance, then surely, the protection of domestic spirits, distilled from grain, cannot be unimportant. For it is a fact, too well and too generally known to require a repetition by the committee, that this manufacture has, for a number of years now last past, afforded almost the only market for the coarse grains in the interior of the country. These grains are of so bulky and so heavy a nature, compared with their present market values, that they will not bear transportation beyond a very limited distance, even when water communication is afforded; and where this means of transportation is not enjoyed, their ability to reach a market is restricted with extremely narrow limits. But did not even this insuperable difficulty exist, it is equally certain that our large market towns do not, and have not afforded even a tolerable market for these grains in kind, for some years last past, nor do the committee see that there is any prospect they will do while our foreign relations remain as they now are. But convert these grains into spirits, and a partial market is afforded, not profitable, it is true, to the enterprise of the farmer, but better than an entire loss.

The Committee refer the House, for evidence to support these positions, to the testimony of the witnesses who have been examined upon this subject. A perfect remedy to the farmer for these evils, they do not believe to be within the reach of Congress. But partial relief would seem to be very plainly presented. Our tables of imports, for the last six years, show a very regular annual importation of foreign spirits from grain and other materials, varying from 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 gallons, a very small share of which is re-exported, and the residue is consumed in this country, and, consequently to that extent, limits the demand for the domestic spirits. The Committee are aware that the time has been when the whiskey of this country would have been a very unacceptable exchange for foreign spirits to the higher classes of consumers. But they do not believe that that objection can, at this time be alleged. Such has been the advance in skill & experience in the art of distilling, whiskey of this country has become a very palatable and a very fashionable, as it no doubt is the least injurious liquor. The Committee therefore cannot suppose that the comforts, or even the luxuries of our citizens, will be much restricted or materially affected by such an increase of duty upon foreign spirits as will reduce the quantity imported.

But as inseparably connected with the subject of foreign spirits, is that of spirits distilled in our own country, from foreign materials. Although the committee have no means of ascertaining the quantity of this kind of spirits, at present distilled in the United States, yet, from the large importations of the material from which it is made there is strong reason to conclude that the number of gallons must be somewhat greater than the whole number of gallons of foreign spirits imported. The importation of molasses into this country, for the last six years, has ranged from 11,

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